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Applicants claim the right of priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a) - (d) based on patent application No. PCT/EP00/05994, filed June 28, 2000, in the European Patent Office; further, Applicants claim the benefit under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) based on prior-filed, copending provisional application No. 60/155,142, filed September 22, 1999, in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office; the contents of all of which are relied upon and incorporated herein by reference.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Field of the Invention--

Page 1, line 3, add section subheading --Description of the Related Art-- and the paragraphs below prior to the start of the paragraph beginning "In the present description and in the claims . . . ."

a2 --British Patent Document No. GB 1,212,795 discloses a radial tyre having a tread provided with a central circumferential groove, two circumferential side grooves, one on each side of the central groove, disposed substantially equidistantly between the central groove and the edges of the tread, and transverse grooves extending from opposite side of the central groove toward, but not as far as, one of the side grooves.

In said tread, the circumferential side grooves are flanked on both sides by circumferential ribs.

The invention disclosed by this document has the aim of reducing the stiffness of the tread.

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U.S. Patent No. 4,446,901 discloses a heavy-duty pneumatic radial tyre comprising a carcass of a substantially radial construction composed of at least one rubberized ply layer containing cords embedded therein and a belt superimposed about said carcass for stiff reinforcement beneath a tread and composed of at least two rubberized ply layers each containing metal cords embedded therein, said metal cords of which being crossed with each other at a relatively small angle with respect to the circumferential direction of the tyre, and said tread being provided with a plurality of continuous or discontinuous zigzag circumferential ribs defined along the widthwise direction of the tyre by at least three substantially zigzag main grooves extending circumferentially of said tread, said main grooves comprising one or a pair of central circumferential grooves located at a substantially central region of said tread and a pair of outside circumferential grooves defining each of the outermost ribs of said tread. In this tyre, the central circumferential groove has such a symmetrical cross-sectional shape with respect to a centerline of said groove that an inclination angle of a groove wall of said groove with respect to a normal line drawn from an outer surface of said tread and passing an edge of said groove in the cross-section perpendicular to said groove wall is made relatively large in a region extending from the groove bottom to at least 50% of groove depth, and the outside circumferential groove has such an unsymmetrical cross-sectional shape with respect to a centerline of said groove that an inclination angle of an outer groove wall of said groove in the rotation axial direction of the tyre is made relatively large, and an inclination angle of an inner groove wall of said groove in a region extending from the outer surface of said tread to at least 10% of groove depth is made smaller than that of said outer groove wall.

U.S. Patent No. 4,773,459 discloses a low-section tyre having a tread pattern comprising a plurality of main grooves substantially extending in a circumferential direction of the tyre in

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parallel to each other and a plurality of transverse grooves intersecting the main circumferential grooves at an inclination angle also in parallel to each other, said transverse grooves are formed in upwardly-sloping, raised-bottom fashion along a longitudinal direction thereof between two main grooves, bottoms of said transverse grooves are raised in a substantially equilateral-triangle shape in cross-section in such a way that a depth of said transverse grooves is shallowest at substantially the middle portion of each transverse groove and the deepest at the bottom of said main circumferential groove.--

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Page 1, line 3, add section heading --SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION- prior to the start of the paragraph beginning "In the present description and in the claims . . . ."

Page 1, lines 7-17, delete, in its entirety, the paragraph beginning "A first aspect of the invention . . . ."

Page 1, lines 18-19, delete, in its entirety, the paragraph beginning "Advantageously, said continuous track terminates . . . ."

Page 1, lines 20-23, delete, in its entirety, the paragraph beginning "Preferably, said continuous lateral wall . . . ."

Page 1, line 24, add the paragraph below prior to the paragraph beginning "In one embodiment . . . ."

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--None of said documents recognizes the problem of the "saw tooth" wear arising in a tyre, particularly on the edges of the transverse grooves of the shoulders. This problem has been resolved by a high-performance tyre according to claim 1.--

Page 2, lines 22-24, delete, in its entirety, the paragraph beginning "Preferably, said blocks of said central rows . . . ."

Page 2, line 25 - page 3, line 2, delete, in its entirety, the paragraph beginning "A second aspect of the invention . . . ."

Page 3, lines 3-14, delete, in its entirety, the paragraph beginning "A third aspect of the invention . . . ."

Page 3, lines 15-20, delete, in its entirety, the paragraph beginning "A fourth aspect of the invention . . . ."

Page 4, lines 3-6, amend the paragraph, beginning "In a further aspect . . . .", as follows:

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Moreover, the invention makes it possible to control certain design characteristics of a tyre, such as the possibility of optimizing the flow and consequent distribution of the tread compound along the crown of the tyre.

Page 4, lines 7-13, amend the paragraph, beginning "In a further aspect . . . .", as follows:

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Therefore, the invention makes it possible to control certain behaviour characteristics of a tyre, particularly a high-performance tyre, such as the possibility of controlling the wear degree and rate of the tread band in use, as well as the roadholding in both dry and wet conditions, the plastic comfort and/or quietness of running in severe conditions of use at high running speeds.

Page 4, line 14, add section heading --BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS-- prior to the start of the paragraph beginning "Further characteristics and advantages . . . ."

Page 5, line 4, add section heading --DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS-- prior to the start of the paragraph beginning "Fig. 1 shows a high-performance tyre 1 . . . ."

Add a new page 21 after the claims, adding the following ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE. A new, separate page 21 including the ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE is enclosed.

--ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A high-performance tyre for a motor vehicle includes a tread having an overall width and including first and second circumferential grooves. The circumferential grooves separate a central region from two lateral shoulder regions. The central region includes central blocks and the shoulder regions comprise shoulder blocks. Each of the circumferential grooves is adjacent, on a side further from the central region, to a respective continuous track from which branch

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